



INSIDE THIS

ISSUE:

- ◆ *FGIS Matters*
- ◆ *News You Can Use*
- ◆ *Feds Feed Families*
- ◆ *FMLA Explained*
- ◆ *New iPhones? Hello!*
- ◆ *New P&SP Employees*
- ◆ *OGC on Mail Accounts*
- ◆ *2016 AgLearn Calendar*
- ◆ *Interns are Here!*
- ◆ *Remembering D-Day*



GIPSA *news*

Summer 2016 No. 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES

Expanded U.S. Trade Topic of Conversation In a World of Constant Change Some Standards Hold Up Just Fine

By Larry Mitchell

WASHINGTON—

There's certainly a lot of talk about trade this month at USDA. As the U.S. looks to expand connections with Asian nations, American ranchers, growers, and producers are also keeping an eye on potential economic dealings in the Caribbean.



I'm joining the discussion to shed light on how the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) plays a role in facilitating American grain sales into foreign markets and assuring those markets are maintained through its world-class service of weighing and inspection. First let me set the stage about recent events.

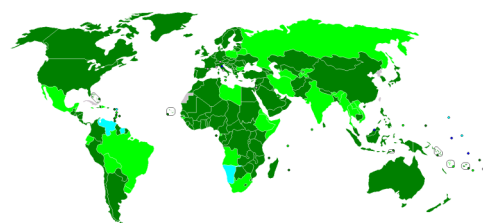
The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is coming up for a vote in Congress, and recently the International Trade Commission released a report forecasting that TPP will boost U.S. agricultural output by some \$10 billion each year by 2032. In his final State of the Union speech in January the president noted that TPP will cut 18,000 taxes on American-made products and add jobs. The president also emphasized that it's time to solidify our relationship with former adversaries and boost economic ties.

Service (FGIS) plays a role in these expanded markets by helping move our nation's harvest into the marketplace through impartial inspection and weighing services of American grains, oilseeds, pulses, and legumes. Farmers, handlers, processors, exporters, and international buyers continue to benefit from FGIS procedures and certifications that for more than 40 years have stood as a *gold standard* representing the quality of U.S. export grain.

Closer to our shores, Cuba is becoming a buzzword since reestablishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries and President Obama's historic trip in March. Staff from the FGIS Office of International Affairs participated in a similar notable event at a USDA briefing April 18 to a delegation from Cuba's ministry of agriculture during their visit to Washington.

FGIS staff explained that as a regulatory agency, GIPSA facilitates shipments of rice, grain, and other commodities now scarce in Cuba, by providing accurate and consistent services for export trade.

(Continued on Page 2)



GIPSA's Federal Grain Inspection

Expanding Horizons with U.S. Trade Partners

GIPSA's Standards & Inspections Facilitate International Trade



Ms. Jennifer Weiland, grain marketing specialist with the Office of International Affairs, delivers an overview of the FGIS mission and capabilities.

(Continued from Page 1)

bans naturally welcome a potential U.S. market for their organic mangoes, avocados, pineapples, and papayas as much as American producers and ranchers are ready to sell their soybeans, rice, poultry and hogs to a country where food shortages are not uncommon. "The key here is making sure that we have legal and regulatory systems and market options so that big and small can be supported and enhanced," said Secretary Vilsack during his visit with the Cuban minister last week.

As opportunities for new markets expand, GIPSA continues its role in expediting trade so that America's farmers remain competitive in a global economy. Initiatives like TPP and improved relations with nations like Cuba, and along the Pacific Rim, set the right course to sustain our rural economies and

enable more families to stay on the farm.

Since 1976 FGIS established a standard for quality assessments, regulating handling practices, and managing a network of federal, state, and private laboratories to provide impartial third-party inspection and weighing services.

I encourage everyone to visit the new GIPSA website and view our *Harbor to Harvest* video: https://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/educout/videolibrary/harvest_to_harbor.html to learn more about FGIS and how it helps facilitate international grain sales.

Last week Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack returned to his home state and hosted Cuba's minister of agriculture on a showcase tour of Iowa—the nation's top producer of corn, soy, eggs, and hogs. The secretary was exploring market options for America's farmers and ranchers, large and small.

"I happen to think the future of American agriculture, and Cuban agriculture, is incredibly bright," he said. The secretary also called for increased cooperation between U.S. and Cuban farmers.

Whether in English or Spanish, farmers speak about trade in a language that is universally understood. The Cu-



A trade team from the Philippines recently visited USDA headquarters in Washington, and other FGIS facilities to learn about grain inspection and weighing procedures. (See Page 5 for China's trade team visit.)

News From Around the Horn

FGIS Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Canadian Grain Commission, GIPSA Interns Arrive



WASHINGTON—Canada and the United States recently signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen the exchange of information and cooperation in grain quality, safety, and quantity assurance as well as related technologies for grains, pulses and oilseeds.

Mr. Randall Jones, Deputy Administrator, Federal Grain Inspection Service, and Mr. Gordon Miles (**above right**), Chief Operating Officer, Canadian Grain Commission, signed the accord at USDA headquarters June 2.

The agreement is an equal partnership and calls for sharing research, technical training, technology transfer, and market support on the basis of mutual benefit.

Among the agreement's highlights, both nations plan to conduct technical training exchanges, joint research, seminars and conferences for scientists and management staff.

(See Page 5 for additional photo)

WASHINGTON—The Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration recently welcomed several new summer interns. Ms. Karmel-Serah Reeves, a native of Detroit, recently joined the staff at GIPSA's Office of Civil Rights.

Ms. Reeves is a rising junior at Dillard University, a historically Black College and University in New Orleans.

"I am currently pursuing a double major in urban studies and public policy with hopes of one day working for the State department as a political/policy officer in the foreign service," she said.

"I am also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and preside as corresponding secretary for Beta Gamma Chapter," she added. In addition, Ms. Reeves is the historian for the student government association at her university.

"It is my greatest expectation that interning for the U.S. Department of Agriculture will serve as a catalyst in helping gain valuable experience to prepare me for a federal career," she said.



Ms. Karmel-Serah Reeves

(See Page 10 for additional stories and photos of this year's summer interns)



GIPSA Idea Hotline

GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.
Please send your suggestions or ideas to
GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-690-2173; or
telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045.

It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors;





FGIS Matters

By Randall D. Jones, Deputy Administrator



Official Agency Supervision Fee

WASHINGTON—The 2015 reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act imposed a statutory requirement on FGIS to maintain an operating reserve (OR) balance sufficient to cover expenses for a period of not less than three and not more than six months. Currently, the OR account balance for supervision of official agencies exceeds 6 months by a significant amount. We have decided that the best way to reduce the reserve is to suspend the collection of the fee effective July 1, 2016. In fiscal year 2017, we will closely monitor and review the account to determine if we should continue with the suspension of the fee for FY18.

New Orleans Exporter Meeting.

On June 8, a workshop with gulf exporters was held at the New Orleans Field Office during which we discussed regional issues, equipment, mycotoxins, and health and safety issues. The meeting was also attended by the U.S. Coast Guard, National Cargo Bureau, Corps of Engineers, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Food and Drug Administration. The meeting was very well attended with just over 50 industry stakeholders present.

Prior to the workshop, Karen Guagliardo, Executive Systems Manager, Office of the Deputy Administrator, held a meeting with interested exporters to discuss the future FGIS online enhancements and what the improved access will mean for them.

FGIS anticipates a Pacific Northwest industry workshop in the fall.

Upcoming Meetings

FGIS Managers Meeting. During the week of July 25, the annual FGIS Managers Meeting will be held at the National Grain Center. This meeting allows for all of the FGIS managers, branch chiefs, and directors to come together and discuss current and past initiatives. This year's meeting will have a focus on quality and FGISonline enhancements. Directly following the managers meeting will be the celebration recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the United States Grain Standards Act.

Supervisors Meeting

The FGIS supervisors meeting takes place during the week of August 4th.

Supervisors from the National Grain Center and from the field offices across the country will be attending. The gathering offers a great opportunity for staff to share ideas, engage in discussions to improve operations, expedite delivery of services, and attend some required training that all supervisors must complete on a yearly basis.

Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!

New FGIS Issuances Take Effect

WASHINGTON—The following issuances are in effect immediately:

FGIS-Directive 3010.2, *Policies, Procedures, and Guidance Issuances*, dated February 18, 2016.

FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 267, *Picking up Submitted Samples*, dated April 29, 2016.

FGIS Program Notice 16-02, *Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2016*, dated May 2016.



What's Cooking in FGIS?

FGIS Signs Agreement with Canadian Counterparts, TSD Hosts Chinese Trade Delegation



WASHINGTON—Federal Grain Inspection Service staff stand with their Canadian counterparts, at U.S. Department of Agriculture headquarters.

Pictured from left to right:

Top Row—Mr. Gordon Miles, Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Mr. Nathan Gerelus, Director of Industry Services; Mr. Anthony Goodman, Deputy Director, FGIS Field Management Division;

Third Row—Mr. Murdoch Mackay, Commissioner; Mr. Byron Reilly, Director, FGIS Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs; Mr. Jarett Goodwin, Manager of National Affairs;

Second Row—Mr. Randy Dennis, Chief Grain Inspector; Mr. Jim Smolik, Acting Chief Commissioner; Mr. Randall Jones, FGIS Deputy Administrator; Mr. Mike Hawkins, Agricultural Counsellor, Canadian Embassy;

Front—Ms. Mary Alonzo, Director, Technology and Science Division, National Grain Center.

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—A trade delegation from China visited the Technology and Science Division (TSD) June 20 for a tour of the National Grain Center. TSD staff led discussions, and presentations on sorghum grading procedures, mycotoxins, and quality control processes.

The Chinese team was sponsored by the U.S. Grains Council, U.S. Sorghum Producers, and the Kansas Department of Agriculture.





Feds Fighting Hunger



USDA Kicks off Annual Summer Drive to Assist Food Banks and Neighbors in Need



Most Wanted Items

High Fiber, Low Sugar, Low Sodium



**Canned Tuna,
Salmon, or
Chicken**



Canned Vegetables
low sodium, no salt added



Canned Fruits
in light syrup or its
own juices



Grains
brown & white rice,
pasta, macaroni &
cheese



Hot and Cold Cereal
oatmeal, cheerios, corn-
flakes, raisin bran



**Canned or Dry
Beans**



Healthy Snacks
apple sauce cups, raisins,
granola bars



Peanut Butter



100% Juice
all sizes, including
juice boxes

Nearly 700,000 of our neighbors in the
Washington metro area are
at risk of hunger.



Capitalareafoodbank.org



Together we can solve hunger

contributions over the past seven years. In 2015, USDA employees alone donated more than 7.4 million pounds of food. USDA's goal in 2016 is to "Beat our Best".

USDA employees in the field play a key role in the collection of food donations and are encouraged to share their collections with local food banks, ensuring that the FFF campaign stretches across America and is visible and active in every state. Agency field offices can locate local food banks via the www.feedingamerica.org website.

The annual drive is designed to help food banks and pantries stay stocked during summer months when they traditionally see a decrease in donations and an increase in need.

FFF is a national food effort led in coordination with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council, and other federal agencies to raise food for Americans struggling with hunger across the country.

Since 2009, through the generosity of federal employees, the food drive has collected more than 39 million pounds of food for those in need. Last year alone, more than 14.8 million pounds were donated and provided to food banks and pantries.

Even as the economy grows stronger, there are still too many people struggling to put food on the table. Children are especially vulnerable to food insecurity. Federal employees have made a real difference in their lives by helping to make sure fewer kids in our communities go to bed hungry.



Feds Feed Families Campaign Begins

WASHINGTON—*Feds Feed Families* (FFF), a national USDA campaign to combat hunger among struggling Americans, kicked off June 10 in the nation's capital.

Last month Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the 2016 Feds Feed Families (FFF) Food Drive would be held from June 1 to August 31, 2016.

As a world-wide leader on issues of food and hunger, USDA has been one of the leading departments in total

News You Can Use From Management & Budget Services

Family Medical Leave Act, *Maxiflex*, *Glide Time* Explained

FMLA Maximizes Time for Families

WASHINGTON—If your family is growing, it may be time to examine leave options. In fact, rocking that new baby at home or on the tree top has gotten easier thanks to recent legislation.



Ms. Lisa Fyall, supervisory management analyst at GIPSA headquarters, explained the difference in leave policy between the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and regular sick leave.

“Using FMLA provides for up to 12 weeks of time off regardless of the employee’s leave balances,” said Ms. Fyall.

FMLA guarantees an employee up to 480 hours to care for a family member, whereas sick leave could be limited to 240 hours of sick leave which the employee is advanced.

Sick leave meanwhile, is dependent on an employee’s balance, including advanced leave, that is available, she explained.

“In the case of a healthy newborn, the sick leave guidance directs that the employee can be authorized sick leave to cover the mother’s recovery period which is typically 6-8 weeks,” said Fyall.

Ms. Fyall noted that the guidance is explicit about a new parent who wants to take time off to bond with an infant. “The parent cannot use sick leave to do so, and use of annual leave is dependent upon the supervisor’s discretion,” she added.

By contrast, Ms. Fyall noted that an employee utilizing FMLA can use 12 weeks for bonding.

Maxiflex, *Glide Time*, Tour of Duty?

WASHINGTON—New USDA employees have a variety of options regarding duty hours and schedules. Ms. Lisa Fyall, supervisory management analyst at GIPSA headquarters, clarifies the most common schedules to ensure

employees and supervisors comply with policies.

“When employees start or change their tour of duty they need to submit MRP Form 346 to their supervisor for approval as well as to their timekeeper. The form can be found at, <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/mrp346.doc>. Changes to a tour of duty must also take place before the start of the pay period. Final approval authority rests with management,” she said.

“A popular option is the *Maxiflex* Schedule with daily core hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. All headquarters employees, including TSD, are assigned a *Maxiflex* schedule depending on mission requirements. Employees who arrive after 9 or depart before 3 are required to take leave. *Maxiflex* tours of duty for headquarters employees may not begin earlier than 6 a.m. and must end no later than 6 p.m. In addition, headquarters employees may not apply Saturday hours to the 80 hour basic work requirement,” she added.

“The *Glide Time* option permits variation on the length of workday. *Glide Time* hours run between 6-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. While employees may deviate from a preset schedule, they are responsible for attending meetings and other requirements,” said Ms Fyall.

Leave Transfer Program Updates

WASHINGTON—An Agricultural Commodity Grader with GIPSA’s Field Management Division, in Reserve, Louisiana, has been approved as a recipient under the Leave Transfer Program and is in need of donated leave.

Anyone wishing to donate either annual or restored annual leave to Ms. Phyllis Johnson, should complete form AD-1043 and either fax it or mail it (not both) to:

USDA APHIS MRPBS HRD
Attn: Kris Wagner, LCT
Butler Square 5th Floor
100 North 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403
FAX: 612-336-3544

Form AD-1043 can be found on the web at: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/ad1043.pdf>

Employees in the News

Packers & Stockyards Program Western Regional Office Welcomes New Employees

Marketing Specialist Joins WRO

AURORA, Colo.—Mr. Walker Jones has been selected for a Marketing Specialist position within the Packers & Stockyards Program at the Western Regional Office in Aurora.

Mr. Jones hails from Richmond, Virginia and holds a bachelor's degree in Agribusiness & Economics from Virginia State University. He completed his Master of



Science degree in Agricultural & Resource Economics from the University of Delaware College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

He had a previous internship experience with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). While at FSA he assisted with crop insurance acreage reporting and occasionally helped per-

Mr. Walker Jones

form routine inventory checks with the agency's loan officer. Mr. Jones also interned with Monsanto's Channel Seed brand as a field sales representative.

Before his selection, Mr. Jones worked as a graduate research assistant at the University of Delaware Center for Experimental and Applied Economics.

Mr. Jones' past research focused on environmental economics, risk assessment, and posted price choice experiments. His master's thesis examined public willingness for exposure to environmental risks, and whether a potential payment would affect the public's decision-making. Mr. Jones said he is excited for the opportunity to apply his skills and contribute to the GIPSA's mission.

WRO Adds New Resident Agent

AURORA, Colo.—Mr. Jacob Birch has been selected to fill the Packers and Stockyards Program Oregon/Washington resident agent position and will spend the next twelve months in the Western Regional Office receiving training in preparation for his assignment.

Mr. Birch brings to the agency five years of experience working on some of the largest and most progressive cattle ranches in the country including Nebraska and Florida.

He recently returned to school to add an MBA to his resume and joins the Packers and Stockyards Program straight from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where he completed his graduate degree.



Mr. Jacob Birch

Before working in the cattle ranching industry Mr. Birch attended the University of Idaho where he received a B.S. in Animal Science. To fund his MBA he completed research for the Nebraska cattle industry. He also participated in extension work presenting his projects to cattle producers across the state.

Mr. Birch is passionate about animal agriculture and excited to see how he can serve the industry in his new role as resident agent.



Employees in the News

Packers & Stockyards Program Welcomes New Resident Agent, *FBI* Mattison Retires

FBI Steve Mattison Bids Farewell

DESTREHAN, La.—Some nicknames speak for themselves, but if you want to know why Mr. Steve Mattison goes by the handle *FBI*, you'll have to find him first. He retired from the U. S. Department of Agriculture last month after 16 years with the Federal Grain Inspection Service.



Mr. Steve Mattison

Nowadays the search might even include an adventure on the high seas.

"During my time I learned a lot about grain. When I started, I had no experience in this area but learned as I went along,"

said Mr. Mattison in a farewell note to colleagues recently.

"Some I learned on my own, and some I learned with the help of others. It's been nice having the opportunity to get to know everyone and you can relax now knowing the *FBI* is not watching you anymore," he said.

In his brief, but friendly good-bye note Mr. Mattison alluded to the mysterious moniker with few details. "When I first started, it was the nickname given me because I was one of the oldest people to start this job. The *old-timers* will understand this," he explained.

You'll have to hurry, or the rest of the story may have to wait awhile. Mr. Mattison and his wife will be setting sail soon and touring the seas from the comfort of cruise ships. They also plan on spending time with their grandson, a budding black-belt in martial arts.



Final words from Mr. Mattison? "Thanks to all those who have helped me along the way," he said.

We'll stay tuned and keep watching for the *FBI* cruising somewhere into the sunset.

US Army Veteran Joins ERO Ranks

ATLANTA—Former Army parachutist Marlon Romo landed a new assignment June 13 as resident agent for the Packers and Stockyards Program in Eastern Tennessee.

Mr. Romo, who was born in Peru, speaks fluent French in addition to his native Spanish. He grew up in northern Georgia since he was ten.

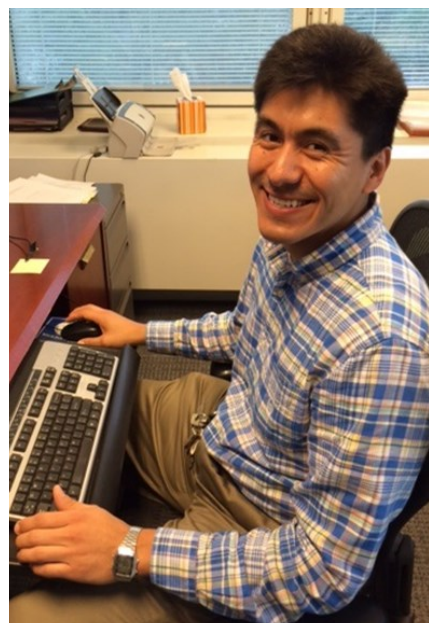
In 2002 he enlisted in the Army following graduation from high school, and was later stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

As a parachute rigger he completed approximately fifty jumps and eventually went on to spend a year in Iraq.

Mr. Romo attended Dalton State College after completing his Army tour and earned a bachelor's degree in management information systems. He received his master's in biology from Alabama A&M University.

Mr. Romo worked as an inspector with the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service in Albany, Kentucky and also taught science in the Clarksville, Tennessee school system.

Following an initial six-month training period at the Eastern Regional Office, he reports for duty near Knoxville. Might as well jump, Mr. Romo. Safe landings!



Mr. Marlon Romo





Around the Horn—GIPSA Style

Bumper Crop of Interns Lend a Hand and Learn the Ropes



Summertime Interns Flock Back to GIPSA and the Living is—Well, Almost Easy



WASHINGTON—Signs that summer in the nation's capital finally arrived are everywhere. School is out. The Metro is barely running. Even *Mr. President* and the *First Lady*, the nation's most celebrated pair of Bald Eagles and their fledglings (**above**), departed their home on the Potomac recently. Empty nest? Not quite. Summer interns are back at USDA. This year's college crop extends beyond Washington, although GIPSA headquarters always manages to glean a few extra.

Stellar P&SP Intern Shines at MRO

By Celise Weems



Ms. Stella Roederer

DES MOINES, Iowa—North English, Iowa native, Stella Roederer recently joined the GIPSA Midwest team as a summer intern. After completing her Bachelor's and Master of Arts degrees from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Ms. Roederer made her way to Des Moines to pursue a Juris Doctor from Drake University.

Her curiosity in law started in January 2013 during junior year of college while participating in classroom debates and as a member of the pre-law club. The journey to law school followed in August 2014.

Ms. Roederer's primary focus is on non-profit organizations. Although she has no interest in setting foot in a

courtroom, she says she will still be able to help—*just differently*. A brief encounter with the Department of Housing and Urban Development working with elderly consumers narrowed her focus after graduation.

"My advice for future law students would be to know what you want to do. Pursuing a law degree is far different from English and History (B.A) and Organizational Leadership (M.A.)," she said.

Ms. Roederer will devote her time at the Midwestern Regional Office (MRO) researching markets, credit unions, and gaining a better understanding of the audit process with guidance from Mr. Greg Andrews, legal specialist.

Ms. Roederer says the internship will help her gain a better understanding of legal language with hopes that it becomes second nature to her.

The MRO's education goals provide students with practical experience in the daily operations of agencies in the United States Department of Agriculture including a variety of federal agricultural programs and rural issues.



Ms. Alexis Foster

Stars Fell on Alabama, MBS



WASHINGTON—A rising star from Brantley, Alabama, Ms. Alexis Foster recently joined the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration as a summer intern.

Ms. Foster, a senior at Alabama State University in Montgomery, is pursuing a bachelor's in accounting with a minor in international business. She is secretary of the Phi Beta Lambda Professional Business Fraternity and vice president of the Delta Mu Delta International Business Society. Ms. Foster devotes her free time volunteering and with family and friends. Following graduation, future plans include pursuing an MBA from her alma mater.



What's News at Headquarters?

GIPSA Joins Sister Agencies for Administrative Officer Training



MINNEAPOLIS—Several USDA agencies including the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), joined forces in one of the Twin Cities recently for staff training on a variety of administrative topics.

Human Resources Division staff from the Animal, Plant, Health Inspection Service (APHIS) organized the joint venture with GIPSA's Management and Budget Services (MBS) representatives for a week-long event May 16-20.

"The training was based on a survey that MBS conducted to determine administrative training needs," said Ms. Lisa Fyall, supervisory management analyst for MBS.

Topics included the Family Medical Leave Act, the leave donor program, personnel transactions, processing, classifications, staffing, and benefits. Instructors from MBS also provided training on safety, OWCP, and the Concur travel system.

Dr. Michael Watson, APHIS Human Resources Director opened the training session with a warm welcome. Mr. Larry Mitchell, GIPSA administrator was also on hand at the conclusion of the training to discuss GIPSA's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and address several areas of employee interest.

Some familiar names headlined the APHIS staff presentation including: Mr. Tom Mack, Mr. Jeff Gutow, Ms. Valerie Stevens, Mr. Jared Sammon, Ms. Jackie Tveter, Mr. Brian Fleming, Mr. Kris Wagner, and Ms. Kitty Weeden.

Ms. Rose Alexander and Mr. Mark Kemp represented the MBS training staff during interactive sessions in which participants were encouraged to engage in dialogue and ask questions. "The method afforded everyone a platform to ensure clarity," said Ms. Fyall.

"To assist attendees reference the latest infor-



Presenters and organizers from the recent administrative staff training in Minneapolis (from left to right): Ms. Lisa Fyall, Mr. Brian Fleming, Ms. Jodie Zorn, Mr. Larry Mitchell, Ms. Valerie Stevens, Mr. Tom Mack, and Mr. Jared Sammon. (Photo Courtesy of Ms. Lisa Fyall)

mation, every participant also received an administrative officer's training notebook with detailed information from each session," said Ms. Fyall.

Mr. Mark Craig, GIPSA budget manager provided an overview of his team's financial operations handling GIPSA's monetary requests.

Comments from attendees were upbeat about the training as much as the Midwestern hospitality.

"It was enjoyable training and necessary for career development," said Ms. Tina Crane from the Field Management Office in Stuttgart, Arkansas. "We had a great time sharing knowledge and experiences. Not only was it informative, it was good to be able to ask questions in person and get an answer quickly," she said.

"I was satisfied with the training and thought the folks at APHIS were very courteous. They were able to take care of our needs," said Ms. Rose Fremin, from the Field Management Division at the New Orleans Field Office. "I also wish to offer a special thanks to Ms. Jodie Zorn for coordinating our lodging and all the instructions she sent us," she added.

What's News?

Get ready for your iPhone, Improve Leadership Skills

Old is Out, New is In

WASHINGTON—GIPSA's Information Technology (IT) Director Dan Knight recently announced plans to replace Windows HTC mobile phones currently used throughout the organization with iPhone 6 models.



The new silver-gray iPhones include numerous features and built-in applications you might expect from Apple like 16/64GB capacity, 4.7 inch diagonal display screen, video and audio calling, 8 megapixel camera, and up to 14 hours talk time.

Mr. Knight said that his staff will begin distributing the iPhones this summer and provided a tentative rollout schedule:

Location	Program	Date
Washington DC	All Programs	August 1-31
NGC KC	FGIS	August 1-31
WRO Office	P&S	August 1-31
WRO RA's	P&S	August 1-30
ERO Office	P&S	September 1-30
ERO RA's	P&S	September 1-30
MRO Office	P&S	September 1-30
MRO RA's	P&S	September 1-30
League City	FGIS	September 1-30
New Orleans	FGIS	September 1-30
Portland	FGIS	October 1-31
Stuttgart	FGIS	October 1-31
Toledo	FGIS	October 1-31
Other FGIS	FGIS	October 1-31

So what else comes with the trendy new iPhones? For the fashion conscious, there are always options like an elegant Louis Vuitton folio in damier graphite canvas, but Mr. Knight was more practical. "It comes in a box," he said.

Optimize Leadership Strengths

WASHINGTON—In response to questions about the USDA 360-Degree Assessment, the training staff at the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) recently compiled several resources to assist employees, supervisors, and managers.

The USDA 360 SharePoint site is the first place to locate information: https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/OHRM/VU/360_Resource_Center/SitePages/Home.aspx, Raters may also obtain guidance at the following location: https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/OHRM/VU/360_Resource_Center/SitePages/Tips%20for%20Raters.aspx

"When used correctly as a developmental tool, the USDA 360 Assessment can help individuals develop and strengthen leadership skills and positively impact their organization," said Ms. Carolyn Thorpe, training specialist.

The assessment tool gathers information about a person's perceived leadership competencies as seen through the eyes of their supervisor, their peers, their external and internal customers, and their direct reports, as well as through their own self-assessment.

The 50-question, confidential survey takes about 15 minutes to complete explained Ms. Thorpe. "They're multiple-choice questions based on 12 competencies from the Office of Personnel Management. There are four behavioral questions for each competency, in addition to two open-ended questions focusing on what the participant is doing well, and what the participant could do better," she said.

All participant reports are only shared with the participant. The report consists of results which break out the user's self-assessment and the supervisor's ratings individually. However, all other feedback from peers and subordinates is confidential (feedback has no name associated with it in AgLearn). Further all data is aggregated by category. To protect anonymity, if there are fewer than three raters in a category (either peers or subordinates), ratings will be grouped into a category called *other*. **(Continued on Page 13)**



What's News at Headquarters?

Information



USDA General Counsel Says No to Non-official Messaging Accounts

WASHINGTON—USDA employees have long been discouraged from conducting official business using non-official or private electronic messaging accounts under departmental regulations. President Obama signed into law the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014 on November 26, 2014. The law created strict disclosure requirements for rare circumstances when employees have to use private electronic messaging accounts, and severe penalties for failure to follow those requirements.

Federal government employees may not create or send a record (document, e-mail, text message, etc.) using a non-official account unless the employee either:

1. Copies his or her official electronic messaging account in the original creation or transmission, or
2. Forwards a complete copy of the record to his or her official electronic messaging account not later than 20 days after the original creation or transmission.

Under 44 U.S.C. § 2911, electronic messages includes both e-mail and other electronic messaging systems, including but not limited to, instant messaging programs and text messaging.

Further, the law expressly provides that, under some circumstances, intentional violation of this requirement shall be a basis for a disciplinary action against the officer or employee, up to and including removal.

In accordance with existing department policies, (see DR-3080-001 and 3090-001), USDA employees are discouraged from conducting official business using non-official or private electronic messaging accounts. During unusual circumstances where a USDA employee does use a non-official account to conduct official business, he or she must comply with the copying or forwarding requirements outlined above.

For technical questions about copying or forwarding mes-

sages, contact the information technology staff. For legal questions, contact the General Law and Research Division in the Office of the General Counsel.

Optimize Leadership Strengths (Continued from Page 12)

What happens for example, if a participant nominates four peers and four direct reports, but only two of the peers actually submit surveys? The report would then combine the peer and direct report categories into a single category called *other*, to preserve the anonymity of all raters .

Who has access to the report? The report is only given to the participant and it is their choice who the results are shared with. The only other people who have access to the report are the feedback facilitators and process managers.

Am I required to participate as a rater? All participation as a rater is voluntary although you are strongly encourage to participate in order to provide feedback to assist in a user's development.

For specific issues or concerns about this process please contact Caroline Thorpe, caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov.





What's News at Headquarters?

Information from Management & Budget Services



Training Requirements Calendar

Course	Due Date	Trainees
Civil Rights: No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring at USDA	New Employees
No Fear Act Refresher	February 15, 2017	All employees who have taken the comprehensive training more than two years ago
Civil Rights-EEO Anti-Harassment Policy Statement 2016	December 30, 2016	All Employees
Cultural Transformation and Civil Rights: • <u>Hiring Matters! Hiring Managers Making Hiring Process Work</u> • ADR TRAINING	September 30, 2016 September 30, 2016	Hiring: Executives, Managers, Supervisors and HR SEPMs All Employees
CyberSecurity: FY2016 Informational Security Awareness	March 31, 2016	All Employees
IDP	December 15, 2016	All Employees
Ethics Training: 2016 Annual Ethics Training video	June 30, 2016	450 Confidential Filers All Other Employees
Mentoring Program (Potential Mentors need to apply)	By January 22, 2016	All employees & new supervisors (required)
Performance Training FY2016 (Either): Performance Management in USDA	September 30, 2016	Required every two years for all employees
Protecting Personally Identifiable Information	September 30, 2016	All Employees
New Supervisor Training	Ongoing	All New Supervisors
LGBT Nondiscrimination	September 30, 2016	All Employees

June Feature—The Longest Day

Now Fading, the *Greatest Generation* Returns to Normandy for the 72nd Anniversary of D-Day



World War II veterans from the D-Day landing listen during the annual ceremony at the Utah Beach Memorial in Normandy, France earlier this month (DoD Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Sean Spratt)

Remembering D-Day, June 6, 1944

NORMANDY, France—Seventy-two years ago nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed along a heavily fortified, 50-mile stretch of French coastline during *Operation Overlord*, known as D-Day. June 6, 1944 commemorates the largest air, sea and land invasion ever executed. It was supported in the air by 11,590 allied aircraft and by sea with 6,939 naval vessels. By day's end, the Allies had gained a foothold to begin the liberation of Europe.

Accounts of U.S. troops storming two of the five beaches of Normandy, Omaha Beach and Utah Beach, are legendary. But just like today, back then we didn't do it alone. Three other beach invasions by Allied troops hap-

pened simultaneously: Great Britain and smaller forces stormed Gold and Sword beaches, while the Canadians took Juno Beach.

U.S. forces paid a high price for the operation's ultimate success and a lot went wrong on D-Day for the *Yanks* who were the first to launch the invasion. The Americans began their operation on Utah Beach at 6:30 in the morning with 23,500 troops from the 4th Infantry Division and suffered 197 casualties, including 60 missing.

Having been shot out of the sky by enemy fire or weighed down and drowned in flooded marshlands, hundreds of U.S. paratroopers from the storied 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions were injured or killed during their drop

(Continued on Page 12)

June Feature—The Longest Day

Remembering *the Greatest Generation*, and a Dad on D-Day

(Continued from Page 11)

behind enemy lines at Utah Beach. Many also missed their landing spots, as did the seaborne forces, which landed more than a mile from their intended destination as a result of strong currents. Between Omaha and Utah beaches the 2nd Ranger Regiment led the assault on the cliffs at Point du Hoc.

The Omaha Beach offensive, as depicted in the iconic movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, turned out to be the bloodiest of the day. Army intelligence underestimated the German stronghold there. Rough surf also caused serious problems for amphibious tanks launched at sea and only two of 29



made it to shore. Soldiers from the 1st Infantry and 29th Infantry Divisions who stormed off the boats were gunned down by entrenched German forces. They suffered the worst ordeal with some 2,400 casualties. At one point General Omar Bradley, who led the Omaha forces, nearly considered abandoning the operation. More than 9,000 Allied Soldiers were killed or wounded on the beaches of Normandy during the first 24 hours.

Back home, rural communities like Bedford, Virginia bore the cost of the war providing supplies and troops. By day's end 19 Soldiers from the small town were dead and four more would die during the Normandy campaign. In 1944 the community of 3,200 proportionally suffered the nation's most severe D-Day loss. Recognizing Bedford as emblematic of all communities whose Citizen-Soldiers served on D-Day, Congress approved the establishment of the National D-Day museum there. It was dedicated on June 6, 2001 by President George W. Bush as, "*a reminder to Americans and the nations of Europe about bonds that can never be broken and debts that can never be repaid.*"



A veteran of World War II and the Normandy invasion, Mr. Raymond Thomas displays his Honorable Discharge Certificate. Smiling proudly with dad is Mr. Dexter Thomas, GIPSA's chief of staff. (Photo by Mr. Thomas)

EWING, Va.—Nestled deep on the Virginia side of the Cumberland Gap, the rural community of Ewing seems idyllic surrounded by mountains bordering Tennessee and Kentucky. You can find spirited pioneers there among the town's 439 residents, including Army veteran Raymond Thomas. At age 93 Mr. Thomas works his garden every day and easily recalls wartime experiences in Europe from the Normandy landing, through the end of the war in 1945.

Like many American young men, Mr. Thomas was drafted shortly after graduating high school in 1941. On day three following the Normandy invasion, Mr. Thomas drove a truck loaded with ammunition onto the beach. He kept driving until the war ended. Along the way he experienced the Battle of the Bulge, met Gen. Eisenhower, and even watched a bridge collapse right after he drove across it hauling a tank. "I never understood why that bridge didn't collapse under me, or how I survived the war," he said. His wife and family were just glad to have him home.